

Durango Cowboy Gathering



History of the Durango Cowboy Gathering

Returning home to Durango from the legendary Elko Cowboy Gathering in Nevada, where he sold his world-renowned hats, Kevin O'Farrell contacted a few local cowboy poets and song writers in the area that he knew and tossed out the idea of starting a Cowboy Poetry Gathering here in Durango. The group liked the idea, but of course, it had to be held in fall after the cattle were taken off the mountain and sent to market because no one had time to do it during the summer. Turns out, this was a perfect time as it was a slow time for the economy of Durango; being a shoulder season between summer tourists and skiers in the winter.

The first Durango Cowboy Gathering was an informal, but lively event with mostly local folks getting together and performing poems and songs for an audience at the LaPlata County Fairgrounds and Diamond Belle Theatre. That was 1988 and this was to be the first Cowboy Poetry Gathering in the state of Colorado!

The Durango Cowboy Gathering has grown from that small event in 1988 to one of the premier attractions of the fall season. We take pride in continuing our mission, to celebrate and preserve the traditions, history, culture, and spirit of the American West. As one of the country's oldest gatherings, the Durango Cowboy Gathering has won numerous awards including "Best Cowboy Gathering" according to True West Magazine, and for the past two years, we have been recognized by the Durango Herald as one of the top 3 "Best Annual Events" in Durango. We are extremely pleased that visitors from all over the world come to Durango to experience a taste of the old West and share in our campfire atmosphere.

Our distinctive four-day event brings to Durango some of the most talented, professional western poets, story tellers, and musicians in the country who convey history and true-life experiences through their songs, poetry, stories, and art. Some of the performers will leave you in stitches with their humor and others might bring a tear to your eye.

As with every successful event, the Gathering could not happen without the support of our business community and numerous community volunteers. We are humbled and appreciative that Durango and our surrounding areas have supported the Durango Cowboy Gathering since its inception.

While I may be President, it is our twelve-member, volunteer board, pulling together as a team, that makes it successful.

Welcome! Come make history with us.

Sue McWilliams, President
Board of Directors, Durango Cowboy Gathering
